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The Effects of Acupuncture Treatment on Sleep Quality and on Emotional Measures among Individuals Living with Schizophrenia: A Pilot Study.

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Abstract

Purpose. To examine the effects of acupuncture on sleep quality and on emotional measures among patients with schizophrenia. **Methods.** Twenty patients with schizophrenia participated in the study. The study comprised a seven-day running-in no-treatment period, followed by an eight-week experimental period. During the experimental period, participants were treated with acupuncture twice a week. During the first week (no-treatment period) and the last week of the experimental period, participants filled out a broad spectrum of questionnaires and their sleep was continuously monitored by wrist actigraph.

Results.

A paired-sample t-test was conducted comparing objective and subjective sleep parameters manifested by participants before and after sequential acupuncture treatment. A significant effect of acupuncture treatment was observed for seven objective sleep variables: sleep onset latency, sleep percentage, mean activity level, wake time after sleep onset, mean number of wake episodes, mean wake episode and longest wake episode. However, no significant effects of acupuncture treatment were found for subjective sleep measures. Likewise, the results indicate that acupuncture treatment improved psychopathology levels and emotional measures, that is, depression level and anxiety level.

Conclusions.

Overall, the findings of this pilot study suggest that acupuncture has beneficial effects as a treatment for insomnia and psychopathology symptoms among patients with schizophrenia.

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